NOVA SCOTIA

Human Rights Commission

2014/15 French-Language Services Plan

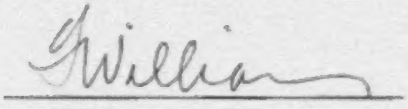
Message from the Director & CEO

It is with pleasure that I submit the 2014/15 French-language Services Plan for the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission. The Commission remains committed to fulfilling the Government's obligations pursuant to the *French-Language Services Act* and Regulations.

The Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission plays a special role in protecting the well-being of Nova Scotia's Acadian and Francophone communities. The Act with which we are entrusted, *The Nova Scotia Human Rights Act*, promotes and protects the rights of members of these communities as they seek to thrive in all aspects of life in Nova Scotia. Our mandate in this regard compels us to serve the Acadian and Francophone communities to the best of our ability. This means maintaining and expanding our capacity to provide services in French.

I am proud to report that we have maintained our capacity to provide services in French. As a result, clients can interact with our staff in French at all stages of our human rights dispute resolution process. Efforts to expand our services include attentiveness to French language capacity of potential new hires, and a commitment to explore opportunities to expand French language services within our public education unit.

Our Acadian and Francophone communities form an important part of the fabric of Nova Scotia society. Historic, cultural, academic and countless other contributions have helped to shape our province, and every effort must be made to ensure this continues. The Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission commits to do its part in this regard.



Tracey Williams
Director & CEO

Responses to French Requests (Written and Oral)

Inquiry / Intake Services

The Human Rights Commission responds to phone inquiries and provides information to the public on human rights issues mainly through its phone service in the Halifax office, through distribution of print material and the website. Staff are directed to provide service in French to all callers and walk-in clients who request or need service in French. Our intake team can communicate in French both orally and in writing. A capacity to function effectively in French will remain a requirement for any individuals hired in the future to perform intake duties.

Written Correspondence / Print Materials / Website

All written correspondence in French received by the Commission is replied to in French.

The *Human Rights Act* is available in French. Greater emphasis is being placed on providing information through the Commission's web site rather than via printed booklets and brochures. Recently, the Commission was fortunate to recruit an individual who will be responsible for coordinating communication activities. Expanding on-line French language content has been identified as a priority.

Investigation / Resolution

Complaint investigation is a highly technical process that requires knowledge of and the ability to describe investigation techniques, legal theory and Commission policies. French speaking clients can interact with the Commission in their own language at both the

investigation and Board of Inquiry stage.

Resolution of complaints through restorative settlements is also an important feature of the dispute resolution process. When necessary, settlements can be negotiated and documented in French.

Training / Public Events / Media

Training and public events are generally conducted in English. Promotional material for public events, such as posters and brochures, are distributed in French.

One Commissioner has French as a first language and is available to conduct public speaking engagements in French. Several Senior Managers have B Level French capacity. Media releases involving Board of Inquiry decisions or other matters of relevance are distributed in French.

French-Language Service Inventory

The Commission currently employs 25 people and operates provincially with three offices: a central office in Halifax and regional offices in Sydney and Digby. The Commission constantly strives to increase the capacity of its staff to provide services in French.

Currently eleven Commissioners, serving on a part-time basis, come from diverse backgrounds and from different regions of the province. One Commissioner is a member of the Acadian community. There are a number of staff who can communicate in French and competency levels vary. Two Human Rights Officers working with Inquiry/Intake

service are functionally bilingual, and two Managers can also speak French.

The Commission has a number of brochures available in French:

- *Human Rights Act* - Loi sur les droits de la personne

- *Rapport sur le profilage racial des consommateurs de Nouvelle-Écosse*

- Basic Guide to the work of the Commission - Guide de base sur le travail de la Commission des droits de la personne de la Nouvelle-Écosse
- For Employers, a guide for drafting job application forms and interview questions - Pour les employeurs, guide de rédaction des formulaires de demande d'emploi et des questions d'entrevue

- Workshops and Training through the Race Relations, Equity and Inclusion Division - Ateliers et formation offerts par la Division des relations interraciales et de l'action positive de la Commission des droits de la personne de la Nouvelle-Écosse

- Plan for Dispute Resolution of Aboriginal Complaints - Plan pour l'investigation et la résolution des plaintes déposées par des Autochtones and the Executive Summary - Résumé

- Tent cards promoting the Commission

Table 1 - Progress in Reaching Goals and Objectives for 2013/14

Human Rights Commission

Objectives	Department Goals and Objectives – 2013-2014	Planned Measures – 2013-2014	Progress in Reaching Goals and Objectives for 2013-2014
Objective 1: Leadership and Policy Direction	Continue to meet responsibilities by increasing familiarity with the obligations under the Act and Regulations. Submit progress report.	French-language Services Act is posted on employee notice board for ease of access. Progress report is filed on time.	French Language Services Act is posted on employee notice board. Progress report has been filed.
Objective 2 – Availability and accessibility of French language services	Hold a Commission meeting in a French-speaking community to raise awareness of the Commission and its work.	A meeting is held in a French-speaking community.	This has not been carried out. However, other Commission meetings have been held with members of the French community in French.
	Management team continues to use French and to promote its usage throughout the organization.	French speaking staff members are used as a resource by managers and staff when necessary. Commission Senior Management Team reviews the French-language Services Act and Regulations.	French speaking staff regularly support colleagues who receive French communication from clients. Communication from Acadian Affairs on French language services is circulated among staff as appropriate. Managers reviewed the French –language Services Act and Regulations.
	Consumer Racial Profiling Project	Executive Summary is	Executive Summary of the Consumer Racial

Objectives	Department Goals and Objectives – 2013-2014	Planned Measures – 2013-2014	Progress in Reaching Goals and Objectives for 2013-2014
	results are released in English and French Web site content is selected for translation	translated into French and made available on the web site. Web site content is selected for translation and publication in French.	Profiling report was translated into French and made available in print and on the web site. The web site is under review and has not been translated into French in anticipation that the review will result in significant changes.
	When the next Board Chair roster is prepared, an emphasis will be placed on recruiting Chairs who can function in French. Staff with French capacity receive training to deliver all aspects of the Dispute Resolution Program in French.	Qualified lawyers are identified for contact when recruitment for the Board Chair roster takes place. Dispute Resolution unit staff can mediate and investigate files in French.	All lawyers in the province of Nova Scotia, including French language lawyers, were notified of the recruitment process for Board of Inquiry panel members. Staff in the Dispute Resolution unit can investigate and resolve files in French.
	Continue to improve capacity.	Staff continue to take courses and attend lunch and learns. Staffing of new positions takes into consideration the language of the position.	French courses continued to be offered to staff. Several French lunch and learns were held. All positions requiring recruitment activities are reviewed for French language requirements.
Objective 3 – Community Engagement and Outreach	N/A	N/A	N/A
	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table 2 – Goals, Objectives and Measures for 2014-2015

Human Rights Commission

Objectives	Department Goals and Objectives – 2014-2015	Planned Measures – 2014-2015
Objective 1: Leadership and Policy Direction	Continue to meet responsibilities by increasing familiarity with the obligations under the Act and Regulations. Submit progress report	Commission Senior Management Team reviews the French-language Services Act and Regulations. Progress report is filed.
Objective 2 –Availability and accessibility of French language services	Hold a Commission meeting in a French-speaking community to raise awareness of the Commission and its work, or organize an opportunity for Senior staff to visit French-speaking communities.	A Commission meeting has been held in a French community within Nova Scotia. Senior Commission Officials have met with community leaders from select French speaking communities.
	Management team continues to use French and to promote its usage throughout the organization.	French speaking staff members are used as a resource by managers and staff when necessary. Staff attend French language training when funded seats are available.
	The website review includes a plan to include select French content.	Core elements of the Commission's revised website are available in French.
	Clients are presented with an Active Offer to speak French when they contact the Inquiry Line.	Every initial greeting includes a greeting in French when the Inquiry Line is answered.
Objective 3 –Community Engagement and	The Commission will engage, through	Members of Acadian and Francophone communities

Objectives	Department Goals and Objectives – 2014-2015	Planned Measures – 2014-2015
Outreach	community-based conversations, with members from the Acadian and Francophone communities.	have been invited to participate in the Commission's new "Community Conversations" initiative.